

Delaware General Health District

Dedicated to your health

Weekly Delaware County H1N1 Flu Update

DELAWARE, OH., October 2, 2009 – Here is the third weekly update on the flu situation in Delaware County. The Delaware General Health District will issue weekly updates to local news media throughout the upcoming flu season. As of October 1, 2009, flu illness is now considered widespread throughout Ohio and most of the country.

LOCAL CASES: During the week of Sept. 26- Oct. 2, there was an increase in children aged 13-17 and adults 18-64 being seen by a healthcare provider due to influenza-like illness. There was also an increase in the number of sales for baby/child electrolytes and throat lozenges. One local school district had increased absenteeism this week. A middle school and a high school were affected with student absenteeism reaching almost 30%. A large majority of the students were calling off school due to influenza-like illness but the DGHD has not been able to verify that this was due to H1N1 because test results are not required to be reported. There were 3 positive test results from Delaware County residents for Influenza A. Two had been hospitalized with influenza-like illness symptoms and another was tested through a private lab.

SCHOOLS: The Health District has supplied local schools with letters to send home with children who are ill. The letters advise parents on various ways to help prevent flu, including keeping ill children home until they have been free of fever for 24 hours.

SENTINEL SITES AND OTHER SURVEILLANCE: Sales of over-the-counter pediatric anti-fever medicine, thermometers, and throat lozenges increased over the previous week.

H₁N₁ FLU TESTING PROTOCOL: Concerns have been voiced about limits on H₁N₁ flu testing. Since early August, the Ohio Department of Health laboratory has conducted H₁N₁ tests only when someone with symptoms is hospitalized or is suspected of being part of a cluster of cases. This allows Public Health experts to identify the most severe cases and outbreaks at a time when the disease is widespread. Treatment for a person with flu symptoms is the same for

all types of flu, so no test is necessary in most cases. For most otherwise healthy people, bed rest, drinking plenty of fluids and taking fever reducing medication is recommended.

SEASONAL FLU SHOT CLINICS: The Health District's seasonal flu shot clinics will start on Oct. 14. Almost everyone is recommended to get a seasonal flu shot this year.

H₁N₁ FLU SHOT CLINICS: The Health District will offer H₁N₁ immunizations once vaccine is received later this fall. Pregnant women, children 6 months and older, and young adults through age 24, and healthcare workers lead the priority list for the first doses. Details on how to get the H₁N₁ flu shot will be announced later. We recommend people check our website at www.delawarehealth.org and information line at 740-203-2015 for updates.

SYMPTOMS: The symptoms of the pandemic H₁N₁ virus are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Diarrhea and vomiting have been reported by some people, mostly children.